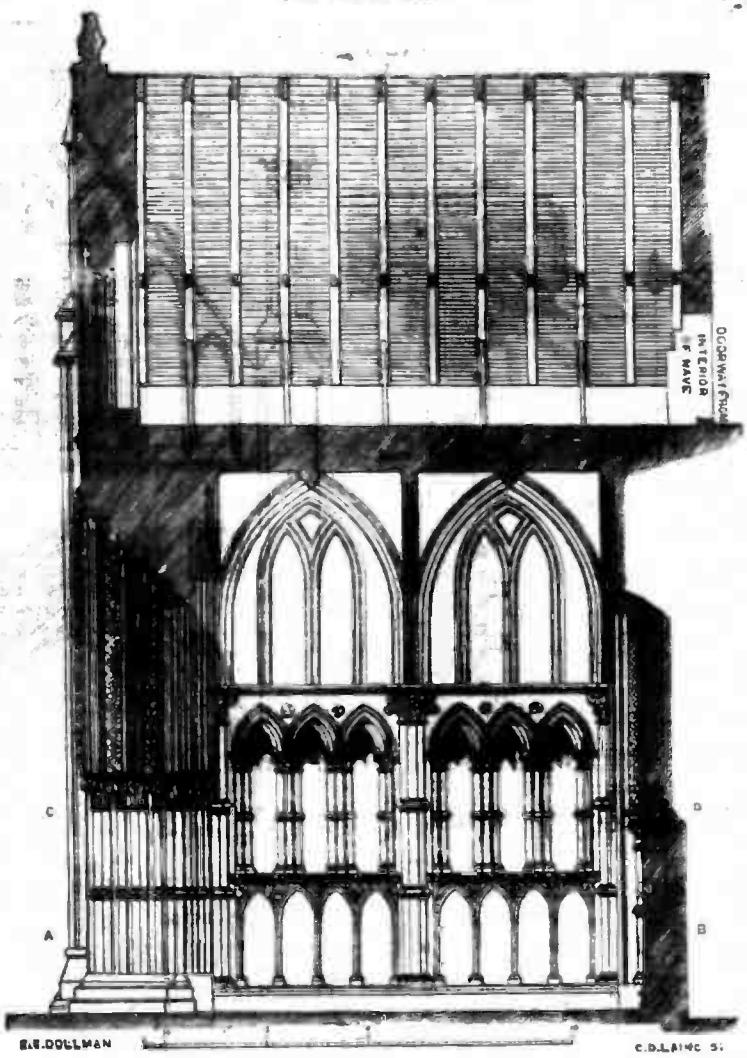
NORTH PORCH, WELLS CATHEDRAL.

A.D. 1223 TO 1239.



LONGITUDINAL SECTION.

CARVED WOOD-FRIEZES.

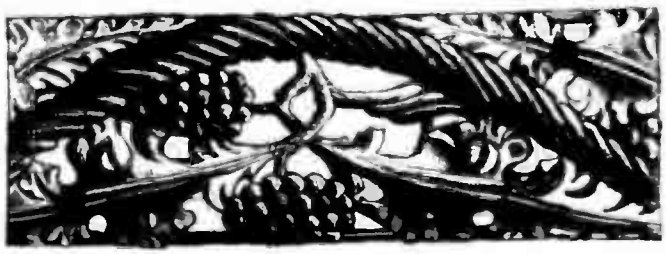
AMONG all the architectural details which our ancestors, during the middle ages, strove with such untiring imagination to vary, the "string-course" holds an important position. Its form and place by no means tend, like some accessories, to fetter the artist in the nature of his design, but, on the contrary, offer a long continuous void, into which he may insert whatsoever his fancy dictate, whether from the bounteous fields of nature, or from the wilder gardens of legendary lore. Our ancient churches present three kinds of string-courses: firstly, those which are simply hollow, and enriched at more or less distant intervals with square pateræ; secondly, those (generally upon a larger scale), in which are introduced—

"Monsters, and hydras, and chimæras dire."

Or, in other cases, figures, human and divine, representing subjects in the life of our Lord, or in that of a patron saint; and, lastly, those which are carved or sculptured into representations of natural plants, among which are pre-eminent, the ivy, the hazel, the oak, and the vine-tree. Of the latter species, the accompanying engravings offer two examples, both from carved wood of the middle of the fifteenth century, the one being taken from the interior decorations of Alderton Church, Wilt-

CARVED WOOD FRIEZES.

(FIFTEENTH CENTURY.)



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